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ABSTRACT

Since 1982 migrant children in grades K-8 have participated in a McLean County (Illinois) summer program of academic instruction and recreation aimed at instilling a love for learning and a desire to grow academically. The program is administered by the state compensatory section during June, July, and August with a student/teacher ratio of 8 to 1. Following a systematic schedule, the Monday-Friday program begins with breakfast from 8:30-9:00 a.m.; continues with classes in English language arts, reading, mathematics, and computer science from 9-11:30 a.m.; provides lunch from 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m.; and concludes with activities such as swimming, watching videos, and health and nutrition instruction from 12:15-2:45 p.m., after which the children are bussed home. Important elements of the program are exposure to the learning center and parent development activities. The learning center librarian exposes children to books, library materials, study skills, and the "Reading is Fundamental" program; he/she also helps students compile resource materials which are shared with their parents at a special luncheon program at the end of the summer session. Parents participate in workshops that address needs of migratory families and are taught how to read to their children and about the importance of parental involvement in their children's education. (NEC)

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LIVING, LOVING, & LEARNING: GIVING THEM A CHANCE

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July 18, 1985

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LIVING, LOVING, & LEARNING: GIVING THEM A CHANCE

Illinois State University in Normal, Illinois, executes a unique program housed at the Metcalf Laboratory School for migratory children, Kindergarten through grade eight, since 1982. This program is administered through the State of Illinois, compensatory section. It is one of 21 other programs in the State of Illinois. It provides academic instruction and recreation facilities to needy children in McLean County. Summer programs throughout Illinois range from 300 plus students to 15. During the summer months of June and July, and August the ISU Migratory program Chapter I proves to be beneficial in meeting the needs of program participants with the full support of their parents. This wholistic program directed by Dr. Peter Alvino affords each student a small teacher/student ratio (approximately 8 to 1). What an advantage for those migrant children to enable them to advance and interact easier within their own school systems?

The children in this special program are exposed to a highly motivated and systematic schedule. The highlights of the program is the collaboration and interaction of the academic conducted classes and the learning center. Their daily schedule begins with a breakfast from 8:30am-9:00am. From 9-11:30 migrant children are provided the "grist" of the academic load: inclusive, are classes in English Language Arts, Reading (often in the learning center) Mathematics and Computer science, and learning resource hour. After lunch (11:30-12:15) students are either swimming, watching a Walt Disney video, learning about CPR, or other less academically prone course work. fortunately the facilities are such that the laboratory schools provides swimming within the building, a video recorder through the learning Center, a registered nurse and many perks not available during the summer months as buildings are being spruced-up for the year round program.

At 2:45, students prepare to ride the bus for their trip back home. This comprehensive 5 days a week program, attempts to "carry-the- ball" as the regular school year comes to an end in early June. Often these children are lacking basic skills due to their once or present migratory status. Following the crops with their parents often takes precedence in the daily walk of the migratory child. Several outstanding components of the Chapter I secures a successful experience for these children: the learning Center, and parental training.

THE LEARNING CENTER

The children enjoy coming to the learning center. They are immediately met with a certified and highly motivated librarian, Mrs. Madeline Hoss. She works collectively or on an individual basis with students. She inspires a zeal for learning, and each student is enthusiastic when library time approaches.

Since the librarian is foreign born herself, students seem to enjoy hanging around her. In the Learning Center the students are exposed to books and non-book materials and spend time discussing and evaluating library materials. They check out books and learn to shelve them. There is TIME OUT for reading in the library every day and a discussion follows on what they were exposed to. Each student has a folder in the learning center where they accumulate the study skills of every day lessons. This folder proves helpful for them, especially at the end of the summer when they take their work to their parents. Students often tell us how they refer to their materials during the course of the regular school year. Students enjoy discussing authors and illustrators and are encouraged to write a creative story, color and decorate their folders. A biography is written on each of their authors and an autobiography often follows. All these accomplishments are presented to their parents during a special program at the end of the summer session; inviting parents, friends, and staff, culminated by a family & staff luncheon.

Students participate in the nationally recognized reading program, Reading is Fundamental (RIF). The RIF program is organized by the librarian where books are given out and stories read. The goal of RIF is to distribute free books to needy children in order to have reading materials at home. The librarian

organizes how each book is distributed, and how many books are distributed to each child. We are hopeful that each program participant will take home 4 books during the 1984-5 summer program. Parenthetically, books are both in English and Spanish. Children choose books with the help of the librarian. The library is an exciting time for children. Parents are invited to see the program and actually get hands-on-experience regarding the daily routine of the learning center. They are not surprised to enter to see a child is reading aloud to a group, writing their stories or just listening to Mrs. Hoss with her puppets.

The librarian also uses the services and talent of the migrant nurse. They both are able to promote reading and research activities through their fun and attractive projects. The most useful and well-accepted projects are NUTRITION, SAFETY, DENTAL and PUPPET. Students are involved and get indulged in reading appropriate subjects related to these projects. They learn to find books in the non-fiction areas, using the card catalog and audio-visual materials. One highlight of the Learning Center program involves taking students to the Community Public Library. It's an exciting trip for students every summer. They tour the library and learn about all the different sections. For many, this field trip experience to the Public Library, may be the first & only time where they see the many advantages of visiting ones community Public Library.

The library/media center is another component of the learning center. It prepares a program geared to what the sudent are expected to cover in that period of time. Students in the learning center seem to enjoy working with Audio-visual equipment. They learn to operate filmstrip projectors and listen to stories on tapes, from Aesops fables to Grimms fairy tales. Students work in groups or individually. The childrens' accomplishments are constantly evaluated allowing the librarian to accumulate ideas for the coming year. The librarian involves the students with creative writing, library skills and a few research projects. The librarian constantly collaborates with the teachers in the program on weekly basis. This constant evaluation helps identify where the weaknesses of the learning center are and how we can improve the goals and objectives. Since the learning center becomes a place of great attraction to the students, the librarian aims to focus on motivating its usage with the faculty and students.

PARENTAL DEVELOPMENT

Parental Development is another exciting component of our Chapter I program. Parents participate in several workshops that address the needs of migratory families. More specifically, parents are taught how to read to their children, in English if they can or in Spanish. Parents are inserviced regarding the specific readiness skills needed to compete successfully in school. They learn the importance of PTA's and overall parental involvement.

Parents through the assistance of K-W Curriculum in Peotone, Illinois, provides parent consultants to conduct these inservices. They share information with parents, in English if they can, or most likely, in Spanish, on the multi-facet components of the American school system. Such topics include, but are not limited to, 1. Child growth and development, 2. Parental involvement/awareness and 3. Readiness skills to cope with school.

The focus of the Chapter I program attempts to instill a love for learning and a disire to grow academically. Parents visit the school and have volunteered to work with the Migrant program. It would not be surprising to enter our school and see our children playing hang man in Spanish on the computer, aided by one of our parents volunteers. It would not be surprising that our students are watching in the learning center, "The Never Ending Story," and eating popcorn with their own parents. They could be writing a story about their favorite video. Students may be swimming. Students may be napping (our 4 & 5 year olds), while the older students are visiting the planatarium. In each activity, the Chapter I Migratory program attempts to bring the parents and children closer together. Therefore, whatever is going-on, whatever is scheduled, you can bet your bottom dollar that the migratory children in our program are living, loving, and learning.

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